

Amish Farmer Raided by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Amish farmer Amos Miller, owner of Miller's Organic Farm in Bird in Hand, Pennsylvania, offers traditional, nutrient-dense food to his community via a private membership association
- › In January 2024, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture raided Miller's farm, searching for raw dairy products and placing wholesome foods ranging from pickled beets and maple syrup "under detention"
- › According to local food activist Max Kane, the officials detained about \$100,000 worth of food
- › Miller's traditional farming practices have been under scrutiny by regulators for close to a decade
- › On February 29, 2024, Kane is calling for people to take action in support of Miller by traveling to his court rally and hearing

The Amish live life much the way it was 300 years ago, and this includes producing the majority of their own food. Amish farmer Amos Miller, owner of Miller's Organic Farm in Bird in Hand, Pennsylvania, also offers traditional, nutrient-dense food to others in his community via a private membership association.

Thousands of customers depend on Miller's farm-fresh food, but they may soon be left empty-handed.

Miller's traditional farming practices have been under scrutiny by regulators for close to a decade, and in January 2024, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture raided Miller's farm, searching for raw dairy products and placing wholesome foods ranging from pickled beets and maple syrup "under detention." According to local food activist Max Kane, the officials detained about \$100,000 worth of food.

Why Are They Going After an Amish Farmer?

On its website, Miller's Organic Farm states it offers traditional Amish farm foods, shipped to your table.¹ In an era where fresh, pure food is hard to come by, it's a service that appeals to many health-conscious consumers. Members have access to "100% raw grass-fed and finished milk and dairy products, pastured meats and eggs, and other unadulterated, nutrient-dense foods, grown on our farm and other surrounding Amish farms."

Further, they state, "All of our suppliers have the highest standards of product quality. Our purpose is to provide real farm fresh, nutrient-dense, great tasting, beyond organic, non-GMO, chemical-free, hormone-free, and antibiotic-free foods employing traditional farming methods."

Problems began in 2015, when Miller came under scrutiny from federal officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Food Safety Network (FSN) prominently featured Miller's situation, dedicating significant coverage to the issues faced by his farm.²

The conflict escalated when the U.S. Justice Department, at the USDA's behest, initiated legal proceedings against him, as reported by journalist David Gumpert.³ Miller first became aware of the USDA's concerns in November 2015 while attending a conference hosted by the Weston A. Price Foundation, where he temporarily stored his raw milk products in hotel coolers.

In an unrelated event, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified two cases of listeriosis, attributing them to products from Miller's Organic Farm. By 2016, the court authorized armed law enforcement officers to accompany USDA Food Safety

and Inspection Service (FSIS) investigators during inspections of Miller's home and farm, despite his status as an Amish pacifist.

During these investigations, the USDA demanded food purchase records dating back to 2012⁴ from Miller, who refused, citing contractual obligations to maintain the privacy of such information, Gumpert reported.⁵ While Miller assumed the investigation stemmed from the CDC's report on listeriosis, it was actually launched by the National Organic Program within the USDA in March 2015, predating the CDC's identification of the listeria "outbreak" linked to Miller's farm.

In 2022, Miller continued to face ongoing scrutiny from the USDA, including another visit by armed federal employees to his farm in Pennsylvania.⁶ The government attempted to issue hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines, which would essentially put the farm out of business. Rebel News⁷ called the court-ordered armed threat "an attack on Amish religious freedom just 150 miles from Washington, D.C."

Farm Raid Declared 'Patently Illegal'

The January 2024 raid stems from accusations from Michigan and New York states' departments of health, which suggested two E. coli illnesses originated from Miller's raw milk or raw milk products.⁸ As reported by Food Safety News:⁹

"This time, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture executed a duly issued search warrant on Amos Miller and Miller's Organic Farm.

The state's responsibility was to determine if raw eggnog and other unpasteurized, raw dairy products produced by Miller were responsible for positive Shiga toxin-producing E. Coli tests in Michigan and New York, causing human illnesses. It is against federal law to sell raw milk and raw dairy products across state lines."

Pennsylvania state police came along for the raid with state agricultural officials. The raid comes on the heels of federal litigation against Miller that resulted in a Third Consent Decree.

That order prohibits Miller from "conducting livestock/poultry slaughter and processing" intended for sale, resale, offer for sale, transportation, donation, or distribution to his "customers or elsewhere," according to Food Safety News.¹⁰ The Decree also grants the FSIS access to Miller's properties. But, according to Miller's attorney, Robert Barnes, the way the raid was conducted was illegal:¹¹

"[T]he Department of Agriculture of the State of Pennsylvania suddenly came, without notice, raided Amos' farm, and detained everything Amos had in the farm's freezer.

They did so in a lawless manner, without appropriate authority, in violation of their own rules and regulations, despite never objecting to the prior resolutions reached with the federal government, and despite a complete failure by the state to even reach out to Amos' known counsel, Robert Barnes.

The state's rules require advance notice, reasonable time frames for inspections, and a showing of credentials, none of which occurred here.

Instead, the state unlawfully obtained a search warrant based on materially false statements in an affidavit by a high-ranking state official in an agency with a known grievance against independent farmers like Amos, and, after the raid and finding no evidence of wrongdoing, then illegally ordered detained every item of food in one of Amos Miller's coolers, including buffalo meat not even subject to federal regulation.

The detention order is patently illegal under Pennsylvania law. Despite the constant harassment, Amos will continue to do all he legally can to provide the food his members deeply need. Amos thanks you for your continued support at this critical time for food freedom in America."

Raw Milk Has Long Been Symbolic of Food Freedom

For millennia, humans have consumed "raw" milk, also referred to as fresh milk, as it was the sole type of milk available. However, accessing raw milk has become

increasingly challenging for Americans in numerous states, requiring them to navigate various obstacles to procure this natural and nutritious food.

The decision to sell, purchase and consume raw milk should rest with the individual rather than being dictated by state or federal authorities. Nevertheless, Big Dairy has effectively restricted access to raw milk for many Americans who seek it. Despite assertions by health departments, the underlying motive behind these restrictions is financial gain, rather than genuine concern for public health and safety.

A Campaign for Real Milk outlined the stark difference in income for farmers selling conventional, pasteurized milk compared to those selling raw milk – and it's easy to see why Big Dairy wants to keep this under wraps. A conventional dairy farmer may receive about \$16 per hundredweight – or per 100 pounds, which keeps him and his family in near-poverty.¹²

In contrast, a farmer selling raw, grass fed dairy directly to consumers will have a very different outcome – one that allows him to thrive while selling a superior, healthier product to his customers.¹³ But as Miller's case demonstrates, if farmers sell raw milk to consumers in states where it's not allowed, they can face armed raids on their farms or be slapped with fines and jail time.¹⁴

Raw milk undeniably serves as a nutrient-rich food, boasting essential nutrients, fats, anti-inflammatory properties, beneficial enzymes, probiotics and additional health-promoting components. Its consumption has been associated with a decreased prevalence of asthma, allergies, eczema and respiratory infections.¹⁵

Regardless of your stance on raw milk, whether fully embracing it as a whole food or holding reservations, the fundamental principle remains: individuals should possess the right to produce and distribute it, along with other whole foods, to consenting adults seeking to purchase them.

Farmers Facing Persecution Worldwide

Why are governments so intent on targeting small operators of food clubs delivering farm-fresh foods to local residents? As long as farmers are prevented from selling to consumers directly, processors can and do price fix the market, ultimately leading to the intentional destruction of small, family dairy farms and consolidation of CAFO dairy farms using taxpayer-funded subsidies.¹⁶

This isn't only an issue in the U.S., however. Many Dutch farmers are facing the loss of their farms over controversial nitrogen rules. The Dutch government claims it needs to nationalize half of cattle farmers' land – an amount equal to about one-third of Holland – in order to reduce nitrogen, but experts say this plan is seriously flawed.¹⁷

Just like cracking down on an Amish farmer providing wholesome food to their neighbors, seizing control of farmland consolidates resources into the hands of a powerful few. And once you control the food supply, you control the population. But there's hope on the horizon.

Support Amos Miller and Other Small Farmers

Kane is calling for people to take action in support of Miller by traveling to his court rally and hearing, scheduled for February 29, 2024.

Court Rally: 11:30 a.m.

Court Hearing: 1 p.m.

Lancaster County Court House

50 N Duke Street

Lancaster, PA 17608

If you believe in the right to access unadulterated, traditional food, this is a practical and powerful way to voice that belief and help invoke change. Miller and other farmers are also targeted via oppressive meat processing regulations, which is why supporting the Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act is another way to fight for food freedom.

Under current government regulations, the USDA, not individual states, has control over how meat is processed. Small livestock producers are forced to drive long distances to have their animals slaughtered at slaughterhouses that meet federal inspection standards.

Small, custom slaughterhouses are not permitted to sell any of their meat to grocery stores, schools or restaurants. The PRIME Act, introduced by Rep. Thomas Massie R-Ky, would allow farmers to sell meat processed at these smaller slaughtering facilities and allow states to set their own meat processing standards.

Because small slaughterhouses do not have an inspector on staff – a requirement that only large facilities can easily fulfill – they’re banned from selling their meat. The PRIME Act would lift this regulation without sacrificing safety, as random USDA inspections could still occur.¹⁸

The act would make meat much more affordable and available, while protecting the livelihoods of small farmers like Miller. Ultimately, the solution to ensuring food safety and security resides within a decentralized food system that fosters connections between communities and farmers who cultivate genuine, sustainably-grown food and distribute it locally.

Sources and References

- ¹ [Miller's Organic Farm](#)
- ² [Food Safety News, July 5, 2016](#)
- ³ [David Gumpert, July 10, 2021](#)
- ^{4, 5} [David Gumpert, October 23, 2016](#)
- ^{6, 7} [Rebel News, August 16th, 2022](#)
- ⁸ [Pennsylvania Attorney General January 23, 2024](#)
- ^{9, 10, 11} [Food Safety News January 6, 2024](#)
- ^{12, 13} [A Campaign for Real Milk, The Economics of Raw Milk](#)
- ¹⁴ [RealMilk.com April 16, 2017](#)
- ¹⁵ [Raw Milk Institute, About Raw Milk](#)
- ¹⁶ [The New York Times October 28, 2012](#)
- ¹⁷ [YouTube, Nitrogen 2000: The Dutch Farmers' Struggle September 2023, 7:09](#)
- ¹⁸ [Human Events May 6, 2020](#)